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UNH Helps Feed Hungry With Generous Donation to NH Food Bank

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UNH Helps Feed Hungry With Generous Donation to NH Food Bank

Thursday, November 30, 2017

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DURHAM, N.H. – 'Tis the season for giving, and in that spirit, the University of New Hampshire donated 1000+ pounds of fresh fish to the New Hampshire Food Bank, a program of Catholic Charities NH. The 600 tilapia, which were grown through a sophisticated integrated aquaculture farming project, will be used to prepare meals for several of the Food Bank's feeding programs.

"We're really excited to see these locally-grown fish make a difference in solving the problem of hunger through the good work being done at the New Hampshire Food Bank," said Todd Guerdat, assistant professor of agricultural engineering in the Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Systems Department at UNH. "Over half of the world's seafood is produced from aquaculture yet eighty percent of the seafood



TODD GUERDAT, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING IN THE AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FOOD SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT AT UNH, HELPS HARVEST TILAPIA TO BE DONATED TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE FOOD BANK.

we eat here in the United States is imported. It's nice to be able to contribute fresh food while working toward developing a sustainable U.S.-based aquaculture food production system."

Students from UNH's Thompson School of Applied Science Culinary Arts & Nutrition program and members of the Food Bank volunteered to filet the fish. After a knife lesson from experts at Seaport Fish in Rye, N.H., the tilapia were fileted, wrapped, put on ice and transported to the N.H. Food Bank in Manchester.

"This thoughtful donation will go far to help us prepare meals and feed those in need," says Eileen Groll Liponis, executive director of the New Hampshire Food Bank. "The tilapia filets will be used by our Recipe for Success Culinary Job Training program which provides at least 500+ meals per day for the Central New Hampshire Boys & Girls Club, and produces meals in bulk to be frozen for use by our other registered agencies."

Researchers at UNH grew the tilapia as part of a farming project that aims to provide a model for integrating land-based aquaculture systems with hydroponic plant production that can be used locally to increase food production. Specifically, researchers are evaluating the nutrients used by plants growing in a recirculating aquaponic system that come from the food fed to fish. Researchers are exploring not only growing the fish, but using that recirculating system to help produce other plant crops like lettuce. Researchers look at integrated farming systems as a way to improve energy and resource utilization, and offer an opportunity to monetize otherwise costly treatment processes.

So far this year, UNH has donated almost 5000 heads of lettuce and more than 1000 pounds of fish grown in aquaponics systems at the Macfarlane Research Greenhouses and the Anadromous Fish and Invertebrate Research Lab. Fish carcasses were donated to lobster fishermen in Portsmouth and/or composted at the Kingman Research Farm. Donations to other organizations included 44 boxes of tomatoes and 28 boxes of peppers grown at the Woodman Horticultural Research Farm and 400 pounds of squash grown at the Kingman Research Farm. All of the food was grown as part of research funded by the NH Agricultural Experiment Station, much of which aims to develop nutritious, good-tasting food varieties that are ideal for the state's growing conditions.

The New Hampshire Food Bank, a program of Catholic Charities New Hampshire, has been working to relieve hunger in the Granite State since 1984. The New Hampshire Food Bank receives no federal or state funding for food distribution. In 2016, as the state's only Food Bank, the New Hampshire Food Bank efficiently procured and distributed nearly 13 million pounds of food to people in need through more than 425 non-profit registered agencies. Agencies include food pantries, neighborhood centers, low-income housing sites, senior nutrition centers, family crisis centers, hospices, soup kitchens, emergency shelters, after school programs, and day care centers. For more information about the New Hampshire Food Bank, please visit www.nhfoodbank.org (<http://www.nhfoodbank.org/>). Find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

The University of New Hampshire (<http://www.unh.edu/>) is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH's research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

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Photo Credit: Jeremy Gasowski/University of New Hampshire

Photo 1:

Brad LaMonica and Ciara McCarter from UNH's Thompson School of Applied Science Culinary Arts & Nutrition program get a filet lesson from Rich Pettigrew, owner of Seaport Fish in Rye, N.H.

Photo 2:

Brad LaMonica and Ciara McCarter from UNH's Thompson School of Applied Science Culinary Arts & Nutrition program filet and bag tilapia.

Photo 3:

Brad LaMonica and Ciara McCarter from UNH's Thompson School of Applied Science Culinary Arts & Nutrition program load tilapia onto N.H. Food Bank truck.

Photo 4:

UNH students Ashu Roa and Ana Devitto help harvest tilapia to be donated to N.H. Food Bank.

Photo 5:

Chef Paul Morrison and Chef Jayson McCarter of the N.H. Food Bank's Recipe for Success program help to filet the UNH donated tilapia.

Photos 6 - 9:

Todd Guerdat of UNH and Eileen Groll Liponis of N.H. Food Bank harvesting UNH donated tilapia.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, health and human services, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH's research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

Editor's Notes:

REPORTER AND EDITOR'S NOTE: B-roll and soundbites available at: <https://unh.box.com/s/5xo1tfjxrzt27dyv1kfz1fcksyl82f>

(<https://unh.box.com/s/5xo1tfjxrzt27dyv1kfz1fcksyl82f>). Interviews with Todd Guerdat, assistant professor of agricultural engineering in UNH's Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Systems department and Eileen Groll Liponis, executive director of the New Hampshire Food Bank.

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